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Reports

Item#1

Temperatures in the South China Sea Continue to Rise. YaleGlobal. Gregory Poling. August 6, 2015.

China announced on July 20 plans to conduct military exercises in areas of the South China Sea, including those under dispute with Vietnam. “The exercises overlapped with a high-level gathering of senior officials from China and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, in Tianjin for their ninth meeting on the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea,” writes Gregory Poling. “That 2002 agreement is non-binding, failing to prevent the escalating tensions, and was supposed to be an interim step on the path to a legally-binding code of conduct.” China’s bluster drives neighboring states to seek closer ties with one another and the United States. Stability and security of the global maritime commons in the Asia Pacific are in the interest of all involved, including ASEAN, China and the United States.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/temperatures-south-china-sea-continue-rise> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#2

China Tightens Its Two-Systems Approach for Hong Kong. YaleGlobal. Michael C. Davis. August 4, 2015.

A one-country, two-systems model describes China’s relationship with Hong Kong. Observers naturally can’t help but weigh the pros and cons of each system, regarding one better than the other. China is tightening controls on the mainland for human-rights advocates, educators and internet users while also denying the “high degree of autonomy” once promised to the citizens of Hong Kong as a special administrative region, explains Michael Davis. How to proceed on candidates for the 2017 election of Hong Kong’s chief executive is at a stalemate: Pro-democracy supporters would like open nominations, and China prefers to screen candidates. Davis concludes that “It’s not in the interest of local Hong Kong people or global investors for Beijing to increase its grip on Hong Kong.” Lingering dissatisfaction, tightening controls and uncertainty could put Hong Kong’s status as a global financial center at risk.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/china-tightens-its-two-systems-approach-hong-kong> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#3

Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War. RAND Corporation. July 2015.

Between March and October 2011, a coalition of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states and several partner nations waged a war against Muammar Qaddafi’s Libyan regime that stemmed and then reversed the tide of Libya’s civil war, preventing Qaddafi from crushing the nascent rebel movement seeking to overthrow his dictatorship and going on to enable opposition forces to prevail. The central element of this intervention was a relatively small multinational force’s air campaign

operating from NATO bases in several countries, as well as from a handful of aircraft carriers and amphibious ships in the Mediterranean Sea. The study details each country's contribution to that air campaign, examining such issues as the limits of airpower and coordination among nations. It also explores whether the Libyan experience offers a potential model for the future.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR600/RR676/RAND_RR676.pdf [PDF format, 466 pages, 9.9 MB].

Item#4

The Iran Hostages: Efforts to Obtain Compensation. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Jennifer K. Elsea. August 4, 2015.

Even today, after the passage of some three decades, the 1979-1981 Iran Hostage Crisis remains an event familiar to most Americans. Many might be unaware that the 52 American mostly military and diplomatic personnel held hostage in Tehran for 444 days continue to strive for significant compensation for their ordeal. The former hostages and their families did receive a number of benefits under various civil service laws, and each hostage received from the U.S. government a cash payment of \$50 for each day held hostage. The hostages have never received any compensation from Iran through court actions, all efforts having failed due to foreign sovereign immunity and an executive agreement known as the Algiers Accords, which bars such lawsuits. The report outlines the history of various efforts, including legislative efforts and court cases, and describes one bill currently before Congress, the Justice for Former American Hostages in Iran Act of 2015 (S. 868).

<http://www.fas.org:8080/sgp/crs/misc/R43210.pdf> [PDF format, 20 pages, 353.34 KB].

Item#5

Irregular Maritime Migration in the Bay of Bengal: The Challenges of Protection, Management, and Cooperation. Migration Policy Institute. Kathleen Newland. July 2015.

Irregular maritime migration across the Bay of Bengal to Southeast Asia entered a period of crisis in spring 2015 as a wave of migrants and refugees crossed, most departing from ports in Myanmar and Bangladesh, with many facing critical danger along the way. The issue brief puts the crisis into context and offers a consideration of what recent history has to teach about responses to maritime migration crises.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/irregular-maritime-migration-bay-bengal-challenges-protection-management-and-cooperation> [HTML format with a link to the full-text PDF file].

Item#6

Human Rights Abuses in Russia-Occupied Crimea. Atlantic Council. Andrii Klymenko. August 5, 2015.

The “green men” who fanned out across Crimea in early 2014, establishing control over key infrastructure and clearing the way for once-marginal political actors to seize the reins of power, were the vanguard of a forced political change that has led to grave human rights abuses across the Crimean peninsula.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/20150306-ACCrimeaReport.pdf> Full Text in English [PDF format, 23 pages, 632.29 KB].

http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/CrimeaReport_Ukrainian_web.pdf Full Text in Ukrainian [PDF format, 23 pages, 2.58 MB].

Item#7

Russia, Putin Held in Low Regard around the World. Pew Research Center. Bruce Stokes. August 5, 2015.

Outside its own borders, neither Russia nor its president, Vladimir Putin, receives much respect or support, according to the survey. A median of only 30% see Russia favorably in the nations outside of Russia. Its image trails that of the United States in nearly every region of the world. At the same time, a median of only 24% in the countries surveyed have confidence in Putin to do the right thing in world affairs, and there is far less faith in the Russian leader than there is in U.S. President Barack Obama.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2015/08/Pew-Research-Center-Russia-Image-Report-FINAL-August-5-2015.pdf> [PDF format, 18 pages, 433.98 KB].

Item#8

Women and Violent Extremism: A Growing Threat Demands Concerted Action. U.S. Institute of Peace. Fred Strasser. August 3, 2015.

The extremist organization ISIS manipulates gender dynamics far better than its opponents often understand. It recruits young men with promises of control over women and uses mass rape as a form of cohesion. At the same time, it lures isolated women with appeals to enlarge their lives by joining a cause. Policymakers seeking to address the role of women in countering violent extremism must take an equally layered, multi-pronged approach to gender, according to experts from government, the United Nations and civil society.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.usip.org/publications/2015/08/03/women-and-violent-extremism-growing-threat-demands-concerted-action> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#9

Continued Bipartisan Support for Expanded Background Checks on Gun Sales. Pew Research Center. August 13, 2015.

Two years after the failure of Senate legislation to expand background checks on gun purchases, the public continues to overwhelmingly support making private gun sales and sales at gun shows subject to background checks. Currently, 85% of Americans – including large majorities of Democrats (88%) and Republicans (79%) – favor expanded background checks, little changed from May 2013 (81%).

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/2015/08/08-13-15-Guns-release.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages, 520.25 KB].

Item#10

Across Racial Lines, More Say Nation Needs to Make Changes to Achieve Racial Equality. Pew Research Center. August 5, 2015.

Over the past year, there has been a substantial rise in the share of Americans — across racial and ethnic groups — who say the country needs to continue making changes to give blacks equal rights with whites, and a growing number of Americans view racism as a big problem in society. Today, 50 years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, roughly six-in-ten Americans (59%) say the country needs to continue making changes to achieve racial equality, while 32% say the country has made the changes needed to give blacks equal rights with whites. A year ago — and at previous points in the last six years — public opinion was much more closely divided on this question.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/2015/08/05/across-racial-lines-more-say-nation-needs-to-make-changes-to-achieve-racial-equality/> [PDF format, 21 pages, 612.01 KB].

Item#11

Negative Views of Supreme Court at Record High, Driven by Republican Dissatisfaction. Pew Research Center. July 29, 2015.

Following major, end-of-term rulings on the Affordable Care Act and same-sex marriage, unfavorable opinions of the Supreme Court have reached a 30-year high. And opinions about the court and its ideology have never been more politically divided. Currently, 48% of Americans have a favorable impression of the Supreme Court, while 43% view the court unfavorably. Unfavorable opinions of the court, while up only modestly since March (39%), are the highest recorded since 1985.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/2015/07/07-29-2015-Supreme-Court-release.pdf> [PDF format, 17 pages, 179.1 KB].

Item#12

GOP's Favorability Rating Takes a Negative Turn: GOP's Favorability Rating Takes a Negative Turn. Pew Research Center. July 23, 2015.

The Republican Party's image has grown more negative over the first half of this year. Currently, 32% have a favorable impression of the Republican Party, while 60% have an unfavorable view. Favorable views of the GOP have fallen nine percentage points since January. The Democratic Party continues to have mixed ratings (48% favorable, 47% unfavorable).

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/2015/07/07-23-15-Politics-release.pdf> [PDF format, 32 pages, 593.01 KB].

Item#13

Mapping Chinese Direct Investment in the U.S. Energy Economy. Center for American Progress. Melanie Hart. July 30, 2015.

The author contends that the federal agencies should support U.S. governors, mayors, and private enterprises working to leverage foreign direct investment from China and other nations to build new clean energy projects in the United States.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/30051604/ChinaEnergyFDI-Final.pdf> [PDF format, 32 pages, 570.36 KB].

Item#14

Devalued Yuan Seeks Reserve Currency Status, But US Dollar Dominates. YaleGlobal. Will Hickey. August 13, 2015.

China is pushing for the renminbi to join the ranks of reserve currencies as designated by the International Monetary Fund. The IMF may delay such designation and gave a nod to China's abrupt devaluation of the yuan, letting the unit respond to market forces. Reserve status for the yuan would be symbolic, a gesture acknowledging China's weight in the global economy, argues Will Hickey. The United States, accounting for nearly 90 percent of all foreign-exchange transactions, would remain the currency of choice. With currencies tied to the dollar, the fortunes of many emerging economies rest with the U.S. Federal Reserve. Anticipation runs high for the US Federal Reserve to hike interest rates in mid-September.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/devalued-yuan-seeks-reserve-currency-status-us-dollar-dominates> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#15

Teens, Technology and Friendships. Pew Research Center. Amanda Lenhart. August 6, 2015.

For American teens, making friends isn't just confined to the school yard, playing field or neighborhood – many are making new friends online. Fully 57% of teens ages 13 to 17 have made a new friend online, with 29% of teens indicating that they have made more than five new friends in online venues. Most of these friendships stay in the digital space; only 20% of all teens have met an online friend in person.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/08/Teens-and-Friendships-FINAL.pdf> [PDF format, 76 pages, 1.38 MB].

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